

There was no objection.

Mr. WELCH of Vermont. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the House is in session on a Saturday, a rare event. And why we do that, of course, is to finish up the work that is the culmination of the efforts of our committees that have then brought legislation to us to consider.

In this past week, we passed important legislation on employment discrimination, fair pay, an Iraq planning bill, Agriculture appropriations, and, very important, critical, actually, a children's health care bill.

Today, we are here to continue the business at hand, and that is to turn a new course for an energy future in this country that meets the needs and demands of the 21st century for a pro-jobs, pro-growth, pro-high-tech approach to solving our environmental challenges and our energy security issues.

H. Res. 615 provides a single rule for consideration of H.R. 3221, the New Direction For Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act and H.R. 2776, the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2007. This will be a single rule. The rule provides a structured rule for H.R. 3221. It provides a closed rule as is customary in tax matters on H.R. 2776.

Today's legislation is about energy independence and creating a new economy around facing directly the energy and environmental challenges before this country.

This year more than a dozen of our committees began the challenging task of drafting energy legislation that, in a wide array of jurisdictions, can challenge the growing energy crisis. I certainly commend all of the committee Chairs, all of the Members on both sides of the aisle, particularly the long-term efforts of men like Chairman DINGELL, Chairman RANGEL, Chairman WAXMAN and others who have presented to us for the consideration of the whole body this comprehensive package of energy legislation.

Early in January, as you remember, the House passed H.R. 6. That repealed nearly \$14 billion that were tax breaks granted to oil companies. Those tax breaks have been granted to oil companies at a time when they had record profits of \$125 billion.

Mr. Speaker, this House has made a different decision. What we have done is decided to repeal those tax cuts and invest that money instead in projects that are critical for renewable energy and energy efficiency incentives. This bill will provide long-term incentives for the development of renewable energy, and it will set the stage for a growing industry that requires investment in order to thrive.

One of the debates that we have been having is this: If we undertake the challenge of energy independence, will that harm our economy? This bill says that will promote our economy and create good jobs. We have seen across

this country, in every State, entrepreneurs taking on the challenge of energy efficiency and energy efficiency in new technologies.

To give an example, in my own State of Vermont, we have a small company that began about 20 years ago, Energy Systems in Heinsberg, Vermont. They began developing technologies to help measure wind velocity for purposes of determining the feasibility of wind energy. It has emerged as one of our most prosperous businesses, creates good jobs, high-paying jobs, and it has been very beneficial to the economy of the State of Vermont, all-clean jobs, all-clean energy.

That example has been replicated across this country. This bill promotes that effort. The idea here in this legislation is very simple: If we make a commitment now to investing in our energy future, we can have that pro-growth, pro-high-tech, pro-environment economy. We can reduce our dependence on foreign oil, and we can protect our environment.

One of the potential opportunities that we have is the expansion of renewable energy development through carbon offsets. If that is going to be successful, it requires that these carbon offsets meet standards that are real, that are additional, verifiable and enforceable.

This legislation presented by the Oversight and Government Reform Committee is going to allow us to put in place that methodology to help us offset our carbon emissions and create jobs in clean energy future.

There are many other parts of this legislation, since we have had 12 committees that have been involved: the Renewable Energy Worker Training Program, to help create a workforce of green jobs; the \$2.5 billion investment to help rural communities, farmers and small businesses by reducing their energy costs through efficiency; the new efficiency standards for appliances, which require more efficient lighting and promotes green buildings in the public and private sector; and, of course, we have an effort under way here in Congress to green the Capitol and offset our carbon footprint by the year 2030. That is, at this stage, a bipartisan effort reflecting the mutual commitment to use less rather than more.

□ 0930

The committee has done a very good job in crafting a bill that we can be proud to support. It doesn't do everything. The CAFE standards are not a part of this, as that continues to be a debate. Renewable electricity standards are something that the body will be able to consider in an amendment that has been made in order.

But, taken together, all of the components of this bill mark a very serious and perhaps seminal change in the approach by this Congress towards energy, moving away from our excessive dependence on fossil fuels and moving

towards a self-sustaining renewable energy future.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to finishing the job that we have started here today.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LINCOLN DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to thank my friend, the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. WELCH) for the time.

Mr. Speaker, last night, the majority on the Rules Committee passed a rule that in an extreme fashion limits debate on our national energy policy. The rule only allows for debate on 23 amendments to H.R. 3221, out of 106 amendments sought to be debated by Members of both parties in this House. And out of those 23 amendments made in order, only five are Republican amendments.

What is even more unfortunate is that in the same rule they completely shut out both Republicans and Democrats from offering any amendments to H.R. 2776. Between the two bills, Mr. Speaker, a total of 94 amendments were prohibited from being considered by this House. And to add insult to injury, the majority also denied the minority the opportunity to offer a substitute.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to refresh the majority of a campaign promise they made. The distinguished Speaker said, "Bills should generally come to the floor under a procedure that allows open, full and fair debate, consisting of a full amendment process that grants the minority a right to offer its alternatives, including a substitute."

They promised openness. They promised bipartisanship. Some openness. Some bipartisanship.

Mr. Speaker, everyone in this body, I firmly believe, seeks to leave our children and grandchildren a better world in which to live. This great Nation has made great strides in protecting human health and the environment, but clearly we can do more.

From 2001 to 2006, Republican-led Congresses invested nearly \$12 billion to develop cleaner, cheaper and more reliable domestic renewable energy sources. This includes sources such as cellulosic ethanol, hybrid electric vehicle technologies, hydrogen fuel cell technologies, wind and solar energy, clean coal and advanced nuclear technologies. But we must always keep in mind that alternative fuels will not eliminate the need for traditional energy sources, and, without additional supply, the tight market conditions that have put pressure on prices are going to persist.

Mr. Speaker, that is something that I must say our friends on the other side of the aisle seem to not grasp. Ignoring this lesson will result in our continued dependence on foreign supplies, using U.S. dollars to line the pockets of thugs and dictators like Chavez in Venezuela as he spreads anti-American